

# County radio system *Volume 8-5-11* headed for completion

by MARIAN MCMAHON

LAKE COUNTY - Councils, trustees and administrators have recently been busy reviewing contracts for costs of the backbone for the county's new 800 megahertz radio system and impending service fees for the next 14 years, and approving them.

"There's two components to this. The one is to pay for the system; that's all the stuff that's on the towers and the base of the towers; the digital microwave that connects everything together (all comprise the backbone)," said Paul Stefanko, director of the Lake County Telecommunications Department (LCTD).

The cost for the backbone is \$10.6 million.

He was advised about four years ago that Motorola would not support the radio system after 2011, so he and his staff sought out as many grants as possible to help pay for the new system. Altogether they were able to raise \$9.8 million toward the backbone. The re-

maining \$881,000 is the responsibility of the communities, certain agencies and school districts, according to air time usage.

"The other component to this is usage on the system; to pay to use the system, if you will," Stefanko said, explaining the 14-year contracts.

The user fees will pay for the maintenance of the system. These are based on the size of the communities and the air time usage.

Asked why there was so much charged for maintenance, he explained some of the reasons. One was that as departments are working with their new radios, they will be requesting some reprogramming be done. In the future, Lake County will also be in communication with Cuyahoga and Geauga counties and the state of Ohio, which will require other reprogramming.

"Reprogramming a radio (requires) a technician to go

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to the radio, take it out of service and reprogram it," Stefanko said. "You have to get the radio, plug it into the computer and reprogram the radio."

That process can take 20 minutes to an hour depending on what is needed to be done. With the new system, they may be able to reprogram over the air, provided the radios have the right software.

The system also needs daily checks and adjustments to keep it functioning properly. Each of the five radio sites will have 18 channels and all of them need to be checked. The microwave system must be checked as well.

If any reports are received concerning problems, the technicians need to troubleshoot and repair them as well.

There are costs for the power for the system and maintenance of the backup generator in case of power failure. There are also batteries

and chargers which must be maintained in case the generator fails as well.

"There's a lot of things that go into system maintenance and, with this next system, because it is primarily software driven, there are times when bugs get into the system and you have to find them and fix them," Stefanko said.

He noted Lucas County has two times the number of sites Lake County does, but the same number of channels and its annual maintenance cost is \$1.5 million per year for maintenance versus Lake County's cost of \$438,000.

Currently the county is finishing the microwave system which connects all the towers. Following that, it will complete the remainder of the radio system by December.

Communities are currently trying to determine the best radios to purchase and at least some are working together to negotiate better pricing.

The county intends to have the schools and nonpublic safety users switch

to the new system in December. All public safety forces will be added on in January 2012.

#### Lake County Radio System Cost Breakdowns

Community/Agency	Backbone Costs	User Fees
Concord Township	\$8,482.95	\$4,438.74
Eastlake City	\$68,614.33	\$23,889.37
Fairport Harbor Village	\$13,995.23	\$5,855.87
Grand River Village	\$1,629.18	\$5,855.87
Kirtland City	\$28,067.44	\$9,825.49
Kirtland Hills Village	\$4,405.00	\$5,855.87
Lakeline Village	\$0.00	\$0.00
LeRoy Township	\$1,822.90	\$1,938.38
Madison Fire District	\$11,828.77	\$6,377.12
Madison Township	\$32,949.40	\$11,442.98
Madison Village	\$9,481.02	\$3,917.49
Mentor City	\$125,072.41	\$57,825.75
Mentor-on-the-Lake	\$31,079.41	\$8,212.89
North Perry Village	\$2,456.15	\$3,917.49
Painesville City	\$95,957.44	\$16,578.90
Painesville Township	\$8,802.64	\$4,438.74
Perry Jt. Fire District	\$5,143.09	\$0.00
Perry Township	\$0.00	\$7,955.54
Perry Village	\$3,816.43	\$3,917.49
Timberlake Village	\$2,455.16	\$5,855.87
Waite Hill Village	\$3,122.16	\$5,855.87
Wickliffe City	\$49,509.97	\$15,352.34
Willoughby City	\$90,750.58	\$24,472.52
Willoughby Hills City	\$69,016.75	\$14,324.50

Willowick City	\$45,232.26	\$15,213.89
LC Board of Elections	\$10,264.55	\$0.00
LC Bldgs/Grounds	\$3,956.61	\$1,938.38
LC Commissioners	\$0.00	\$1,938.38
LC Coroner	\$0.00	\$1,938.38
LC Dog Warden	\$23,489.45	\$934.98
LC EMA	\$528.84	\$1,938.38
LC Engineer	\$54,464.70	\$5,855.87
LC Garage	\$2,089.07	\$1,938.38
LC General Health	\$8,174.05	\$934.98
LC Narcotics	\$8,031.34	\$1,938.38
LC Prosecutor	\$273.46	\$1,938.38
LC Sheriff	\$0.00	\$71,065.42
LC Utilities	\$0.00	\$11,726.76
LC Utilities (Baler)	\$28,038.37	\$0.00
LC Utilities (Water)	\$89,344.44	\$0.00
LC Telecommunications	\$13,665.63	\$0.00
Lake Hospital System	\$30,961.15	\$7,834.97
Lake Metroparks	\$12,987.20	\$3,917.49
Lakeland Comm. College	\$16,301.55	\$3,917.49
Laketrans	\$0.00	\$0.00
Deepwood Center	\$10,218.47	\$6,417.84
Kirtland Schools	\$36,812.31	\$2,093.13
Madison Schools	\$4,916.69	\$3,580.31
Mentor Schools	\$24,652.37	\$11,954.46
Perry Schools	\$7,375.03	\$2,604.60
Painesville City Schools	\$4,462.98	\$3,673.16
Riverside Schools	\$12,066.57	\$8,092.35
Wickliffe City Schools	\$4,505.18	\$2,511.76
Willoughby-Eastlake Schools	\$16,948.05	\$8,836.76

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